
The writings of Zhao Shuli and his contribution to Chinese Society Chiranjib Sinha

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Abstract: Zhao Shuli's writing and enlightenment of rural masses of China. Zhao Shuli entered the Changchi Fourth Normal School in 1925, but soon became involved in the anti-warlord movement among the students, resulting in a brief imprisonment. After his release, he taught for a time at his village primary school, and continued his work with local theater troupes and his various political activities. Zhao Shuli was a major contributor to the local wartime journals, and even undertook the editorship of his own small newspaper.

Key words: Zhao Shuli, Contribution, Chinese Society, Communist Party .

Introduction:

Zhao Shuli (1905-1970) represented the Maoist ideal of a creative writer, who wrote vividly of the peasants' awakening to socialism in a style largely free of the Western influences which had dominated Chinese fiction since 1918. Zhao Shuli was born in 1906 in a village called Yuchi at the foot of the T'aihang Mountains in the province of Shansi. As a child, he worked on his father's farm, herding cattle and collecting manure, but found time to participate in a local folk music group as well, where he learned the techniques of traditional storytelling. With his father's encouragement, Zhao Shuli entered the Changchi Fourth Normal School in 1925, but soon became involved in the anti-warlord movement among the students, resulting in a brief imprisonment. After his release, he taught for a time at his village primary school, and continued his work with local theater troupes and his various political activities. After the outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan(1937-1945), the Communist Eighth Route Army consolidated itself in the Taihang District in which Zhao's village lay. The Taihang base, as a major wartime center, was one of the few to establish a printing press. Zhao Shuli was a major contributor to the local wartime journals, and even undertook the editorship of his own small newspaper.

He joined the revolution and became a member of the Communist Party of China in 1937. During the War of Resistance Against Japan (1937-45) and the War of Liberation (1946-49), he was actively engaged in creative writing and the Party's work on literature and art. Greatly influenced by Chairman Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art," (1942), he tried to penetrate into life's realities and completed many stories, the best of which include "Marriage of Xiao Erhei"(小二黑结婚), "Rhymes of Li Youcai"(李有才板话) "Registration" (登记) , "Changes in the Li village" (李家庄的变迁) etc. By creating these marvelous stories, Zhao Shuli made an important contribution to the national popularization of the art of fiction. He broke new ground in characterization, plot structure and use of language, to form a unique creative style of his own. Zhao Shuli's novel is marked with strong Chinese national characteristics, changing the developing landscape of modern Chinese Literature.

This paper will focus on how far the writing of Zhao Shuli reflects rural society of

China and his contribution to enlighten Chinese peasants before the liberation of China.

His works & contribution:

Zhao Shuli occupies a significant position in the history of the modern Chinese literature for his contribution to the national popularization of the art of fiction. The subjects of Zhao Shuli's stories were drawn from the conflicts he confronted in his work in rural China's Shanxi province.

Zhao Shuli himself once said: "My work, I often calls it a problem novel. Why is this name? It is because the novel I wrote is a problem I encountered when I went to the countryside. I feel that if the problem is not solved, it will hinder us. The progress of the work should be put forward." (FN1). The 'problem novel' of Zhao Shuli was aimed to 'advise people'.

To understand Zhao Shuli and his works as well as his contribution towards advising masses for the development of the rural society, it is necessary to mention some background history.

Chinese prose writing has been divided into two streams, separated at least for the last 1,000 years by a gap much wider than the one between folk songs and so-called literary poems. Classical, or literary, prose (guwen 古文, or wenyen 文言) aims at the standards and styles set by ancient writers and their distinguished followers of subsequent ages, with the Confucian Classics and the early philosophers as supreme models. While the styles may vary with individual writers, the language is always far removed from their spoken tongues. Sanctioned by official requirement for the competitive examinations and dignified by traditional respect for the cultural accomplishments of past ages, this medium became the linguistic tool of practically all Chinese prose writers. Vernacular prose (baihua 白话), in contrast, consists of writings in the living tongue, the everyday language of the authors. Traditionally considered inferior, the medium was piously avoided for creative writing until it was adopted by novelists and playwrights from the 13th century on.

The literature of ancient China may be divided into two types, one is literature for the learned persons and another is popular literature. The popular literature all along had been taken lightly by the intellectual classes due to less refinement and at the same time the literature for learned persons, due to its language and other factors, was far from the reach of the literary level of the common masses.

The May Fourth Movement had targeted this issue but most of the initiators and participators of that literary movement were from intellectual class and as a result, most of those produced works by those writers were also kind of a literature for learned person, not close to the popular literature. Though they called those literary works as pure literature, full of overseas flavor but neglected some popular features of ancient China like the chapter styled literature (章回体) of China which had the popular fiction pattern with flavor of talking and singing (说唱, folk based), very popular among common masses.

Elegant culture and language of those ancient literary works were beyond the label of majority of literate or semi literate huge masses of China of that period and they neither could read nor understand which made Zhao Shuli sad and upset. Henceforth, he decided to become a literary soldier and according to him, for becoming a revolutionary

writer, one must pick the pen up and seize the position of rural culture, provide the broad masses of peasant brother the spiritual food that they liked to listen and read (喜闻乐见), and make them capable of being open-minded, kind as well as powerful. So, as a soldier, Zhao Shuli picked up his fighting pen, stepped firmly on the path of popular literary creation, and consciously integrated popularization, mass catering, and revolution into one, forged his unique aesthetic appearance and formed his own distinct artistic style, created his outstanding literary achievements.

Lu Xun (鲁迅), the first main stream writer after May 4th era, who raised the peasant issue in modern Chinese literature, had also urged writers to use 'colloquial language' of the 'living people' and all such ideas were later on used in the base areas. Mr. Zhao Shuli was the most outstanding writer, whose writings were representative works of kind of literature that they were looking for during that time. Zhao Shuli's works neither followed the trend of So called pure literature of May Fourth nor fully copied the old typed literature; rather, he created a style in literature which was pure and popular, the type of literature earlier put forwarded by Lu Xun and Qu Qiubai(瞿秋白). He combined the pure literature with popular literature exactly what was required to fulfill the task of popularization of art and literature. As Zhao Shuli was a leading writer of that period who showed the direction of revolutionary utilitarianism and popularization of literature, thus the era (40's-50) is also known as the era of Zhao Shuli.

It is true that the talks at Yanan by Mao Zedong on literature and art in May 1942 (延安文艺座谈会上的讲话) provided theoretical base for the new period of the literary history represented by Zhao Shuli. Two important issues focused on that speech by Mao were what the literature and art was going to serve to the people and how it was to be served. The new literature and art must create new pattern which masses love to listen and read (喜闻乐见) avoiding that traditional style which they often listen and see (习闻常见) whenever they wanted, from time to time. Zhao Shuli's earlier life and studies made him familiar with the traditional national art and literature as well as folk art and literature. He took the progressive and good part of the traditional literature and ignored useless things as he considered application of such useless things might have negative impact for the cause of revolution. Zhou Yang(周扬), a critic of the Communist Party's literary and art policy and spokesperson said that Zhao Shuli's style was new and fresh and unique one and only that type of literature could serve for the revolution and popularization.(FN.2)

In his life span of 64 years, he had experienced three historical eras of democratic revolution, socialist revolution and socialist reconstruction. In every period, Zhao Shuli followed the foot mark of Communist Party of China and led a significant and creative life. He successfully described the changes of rural society in his writing. Zhao Shuli's close attachment with the rural life which provided him adequate knowledge on rural people, their society and various contradictions inside the rural community which he had very cautiously as well as proficiently expressed in his writings. That's why his works had been able to attract attention of the readers of all level specially peasant masses. His stories had also been used in dramas, operas and films. He became the spirit of many Chinese readers of that era and his stories encouraged people to raise the banner of revolutionary literature. That's why during the crisis period, before and just after the Yan'an speech by Mao, at a time when C.P.C was struggling to convince the writers towards their policies on

Literature and art, suddenly the party leadership raised the slogan of ‘follow the direction of comrade Zhao Shuli’

What was the reason that led C.P.C to issue such an important order to writers to follow Zhao Shuli and what were those directions that C.P.C actually tried to emphasize?

Zhao Shuli was a true revolutionist and an active member of CPC. Later on, when we analyze his works, we would see that, the spirit of revolution and party policies are prominent in his writings. Whatever he did in his life, as a writer as well as a normal human being, the spirit of the revolution as well as norms and principles of the party were always in his mind and importantly, he followed those accordingly. All most all of his famous stories depict the real life of Chinese peasants for the cause of the revolution and the party. Though, in his early life, he had faith on spirituality and wrote on different subject matters but later on once he came close to Marxism, his ideas veered towards materialism and since then he paid no attention on abstract subject matter. He believed in truth and followed a rational line to do something for the sake of revolution and people.

His close connection with the peasant society of China made him to realize the important fact, for which he would be known for ever, was, he noticed that the literary level of the masses had been totally destroyed by the old feudal system and created a big gap between peasants and literature. Apart from inadequate food and clothes, the poor peasants were also in lack of spiritual consciousness because of their inaccessibility to the elegant culture. Due to the earlier complicated literary form, peasants were unable to read and understand and as a result, gradually they lost all their interest towards literature. Zhao considered the task of popularization of art and literature mandatory to raise the overall consciousness of the peasant masses and bring them out of the dark cage of feudalism. If we read his stories like “Marriage of Xiao Erhei”(小二黑结婚), “Rhymes of Li Youcai”(李有才板话) “Registration” (登记), “Changes in the Li village” (李家庄的变迁) or “Old custom”, it is clearly evident that the language and content of his stories always focused on above mentioned facts. Zhao Shuli believed that only popularization could fulfill the gap between peasant and literature, so he took the oath to write such type of popular stories which peasant masses would like to read and listen and their new habit would help them to enlighten their thought.

The core content of Zhao Shuli's direction was to focus on the following three aspects related to how a revolutionary literature should serve the masses.

First, it should have a distinct political tendency which clearly reflects the contradictions and struggle between the peasant class and the landlord class in the liberated areas. For example, his stories “Marriage of Xiao Erhei” and “Rhymes of Li Youcai” are good examples of the Above Mention themes.

Second, in artistic expressions, apply oral language of the masses and create a good lively example which the peasants like to read and listen. All most all known stories of Zhao Shuli were written in local colloquial language of Shanxi.

Third, the writers must have spirit of high degree of revolutionary utilitarianism and a long-term hard work, seeking truth from facts, and can wholeheartedly serve the workers and peasants. Stories written by Zhao Shuli like “uncontrolled hands(套不住的手)”, “Changes in Li village” and “San Liwan (三里湾)” are examples that are based on above mentioned spirits.

Thus, Zhao Shuli's creation became a model that can reflect the literary line as proposed by Mao Zedong in his speech at Yanan. Zhao Shuli's direction had huge impact on literature of entire liberated area and even had an impact on the literature of 1950s and 1960s.

Zhao Shuli in his novels tried to advise people and made people understand the reality. He always tried to write according to original appearance of life. As the saying goes: 'storytelling and performing are for advising people' some of his works were adapted into various other artistic forms. For example, his story 'Registration' (登记), altered into "Arhat Money" (罗汉钱), was accepted by Shanxi opera, Henan opera, Guangdong opera, Pingju opera, Shanghai opera, etc. and staged. Zhao Shuli collected materials for his stories mostly from southeast part of Shanxi where he had close contact with the grass root people and other affairs of the region, thus characters in his stories are simple and honest. While writing short stories or novels, he never ignored the need of social transformations, mainly to eliminate out-dated influence in people's mind which they inherited from their old backward culture and corrupt system and practices. His stories like "Marriage of Xiao Erhei" or "Fu Gui" (福贵) etc are good examples of such themes.

The idea of popularization of art was always in the mind of Zhao Shuli. During the time of war against Japan and later on, in some rural CPC controlled areas, through his works, he became popular like other great leaders of the country of that era and such popularity helped him to draw the attention of the central higher CPC leaders. Leaders were quite surprised to see the interest of semi-literate Chinese rural masses on Zhao Shuli's work. They didn't want to lose the opportunity and were encouraged to raise the cultural standard of the Chinese peasant masses through the literary works of Zhao Shuli. Later on, many great writers of that era like Mao Dun(矛盾) and Guo Moruo (郭沫若) and others had also appreciated his work and wrote commentary on his works.

It was Peng Dehuai(彭德怀), then Deputy Commander-In-Chief of the Red Army, who read the manuscript of Zhao's story "Marriage of Xiao Erhei" (小二黑结婚) and felt quite good and commented on the story(FN 3). Immediately after that, people responded with great interest to Zhao Shuli's story. Not only a large number of copies were sold out but the story was also used in opera, drama etc. Within a short time another story "Rhymes of Li Youcai" (李有才板话) was published and allegory of Li Youcai became very familiar in the countryside and essays on this story was also published. Soon he became known as people's writer in that region. Though these stories became popular among the peasant community of Shanxi Region but it took time to reach to the outside readers. In 1946, famous writer Guo Moruo(郭沫若)read his stories in Shanghai and immediately wrote about him in 'literature and art of liberated areas', and he said " Zhao Shuli is a big tree grown in the countryside, flourishing and continuously growing".(FN 4) Mao Dun(矛盾)also wrote a commentary on his novel "Changes in the Li village" (李家庄的变迁) and "Rhymes of Li Youcai"(李有才板话) and highly appreciated his popular style. He described "Rhymes of Li Youcai"(李有才板话) as symbol of development of popularization of art and development of national form of art. He described "Changes in the Li village"(李家庄的变迁) as a successful novel on the life of liberated area and a good example of the high quality of literary works after the rectification campaign. Later on in 'Liberation Daily' Zhou

Yang, ("论赵树理的创作 "On the writing of Zhao Shuli", Liberation Daily(Yan'an),26th August,1946 published essays on Zhao Shuli. Zhou Yang in his essay 'Zhao Shuli and his story' described various sides of his creativity of Zhao Shuli. He wrote "tremendous changes in the countryside demands expression in works of art and literature. The writings of Zhao Shuli meet this demand to a large extent. Zhao Shuli is a new writer, but one with considerable experience in writing and life, a writer who matured before he became well-known, and an artist from the people who has created a new, popular style".(FN 5)

After these commentaries by renowned persons, gradually his name and fame started spreading from rural areas to all over the country. He was considered as a genuine representative writer of Mao's idea of 'literature for the workers and peasants and soldiers'. Now, let us discuss these stories, referred by these well known writers and critics, in details to have a better understanding of writings of Zhao Shuli. Zhao Shuli's story "The Marriage of Xiao Erhei"((小二黑结婚), first among these three stories,(apart from "Rhymes of Li Youcai" "李有才板话" and Changes in Li Village" "李家庄的变迁") which made him known and popular among huge peasant masses in China.

In May, 1943, "Marriage of Xiao Erhei"(小二黑结婚)) a simple tale discrediting superstition and advocating free choice of one's marital partner was published by the Taihang New China Press. It was repeatedly reprinted, even used in drama. The character of Xiao Erhei(小二黑) and Xiao Qin(小芹) of that story became very popular in every household of the base area. The "Marriage of Xiao Erhei"(小二黑结婚)describes a love story in a base area. A pair of youth Xiao Erhei(小二黑) and Xiaoqin (小芹,bravely fought against backward patriarchy and feudal traditions, to finally become happily married.

The main content of the story follows like this:

There were two "divinities" (神仙) that lived in Liujia zhuang, in northern Shaanxi province. One was known as Er Zhuge(二诸葛) , of the Front Village, and the other was called San Xianggu (三仙姑) , of the Rear Village. Er Zhuge is timid, superstitious and stubbornly defends patriarchy (父权制) who had received some education, so before he took any action, he would always consider the Yin-Yang and the Eight Trigrams (阴阳八卦) , and check if the day was a lucky one or not. San Xianggu was wife of Yu Fu (于福) , practically a lazy and dishonest woman who on the first and fifteenth of every month, she would wear a red scarf and disguise herself as a deity. She also was envying her daughter's happiness.

These two characters portrayed as backward, were against the love and free marriage and defend the traditional marriage system. The problem soon surfaces: Xiao Erhei, son of Er Zhuge's had loved Xiao Qin, daughter of San Xianggu, for about three years, but their match was opposed by his father Er Zhuge(二诸葛). He had three baseless grounds to oppose; first, their horoscopes didn't match. Xiao Erhei was 'metal' while Xiao Qin was 'fire' and fire could consume metal. (第一小二黑是金命, 小芹是火命, 恐怕火克金). The second point was, Xiao Qin was born in the tenth month of the lunar calendar, which was considered to be unlucky (第二小芹生在十月, 是个犯月). The third point was the girl's mother San Xianggu (三仙姑) had a very bad reputation (第三是三仙姑的声名不好) .

SanXianggu, the mother of Xiao Qin,who liked to mess with young guys, was also opposed to the match, because she herself had soft corner for Xiao Erhei. She was afraid that she would lose her opportunities to chat with him if he married her daughter, so she

envying her daughter's happiness and hoping to make a fortune by marrying Xiao Qin to a rich old retired person who had just lost his wife.

There were also two complete crooked persons named Jin Wang (金旺) and Xin Wang (兴旺) who lived in Liujia zhuang. They originally worked for some bandits, guiding them in their robbing and kidnapping, and then extorted money from the victims' families for return of the hostages. After the Eighth Route Army defeated the bandits, the county government appointed a village head to establish revolutionary authority. Most of the villagers were quite timid, however, and nobody dared to become an official. This gave Jinwang and Xinwang the opportunity to seize power by taking official posts, where they continued to do bad things.

One day, when Xiao Qin was home alone, Jin Wang tried to harass her. Rebuffed, he held a grudge against her, and later used his power to have Xiao Erhei and Xiao Qin arrested, accusing them of free love that violated traditional morality. Luckily, the head of the district finally heard about the terrible things Jin Wang and Xin Wang had done, and so arrested them instead. Finally, Erhei and Xiao Qin, with the support of the new government, married of their own free will. At the end of the story, we see both of these old people, Er Zhuge and San Xianggu after being insulted for their feudal thoughts, gradually started changing.

The novel profoundly reveals the small producers' backwardness and alludes to the inevitability of democratic reforms and transformation of social traditions in rural China. Xiao Erhei and Xiao Qin represent the youthful and progressive forces. Their fight for freedom in marriage foreshadows the great historic trend of the new forces will definitely triumph over the old. In the strong characterizations of Er Zhuge and San Xianggu, The "Marriage of Xiao Erhei" passionately praises the great power of the democratic system and reflects the great changes taking place in the liberated areas. The publication of The "Marriage of Xiao Erhei" marked a fundamental change in the established Chinese literary world.

Next, another story "Rhymes of Li Youcai" (李有才板话), was also published in 1943. In this story, theme that Zhao had chosen was the core issue of the peasants in liberated areas during that time. The process of the transformation of the society had started and Chinese peasants were passing through a crucial period of their struggle against landlords to seize political power. The peasants had to unite and follow the instructions from the upperlevel leaders. Through the rhymes of Li Youcai in this story, Zhao Shuli had mirrored the real situation in rural areas in a fantastic way and his appeal had widely been responded by the peasant masses. The story shows how familiar this writer was with various internal problems of peasant community, their mentality and life. He had complete understanding of the reality of the rural society of that era which may be considered a unique quality and advantage of Zhao Shuli's success as a social reformer. In "Rhymes of Li Youcai"(李有才板话), he used rhythmic comic talk (allegro) type style, familiar to the peasant classes to imbue them to make conscious of class struggle. In this story, he emphasized on the corruption of the landlord during land reform programme in the village. He represents Li Youcai, a poor and homeless peasant as a kind of spokes person to point out the errors, actual facts and truth and also used him to unite the villagers through his rhymes as only poor people not to the rulers had access to his rhymes

In “Rhymes of Li Youcai”, the war between peasant and landlord is fully developed. The struggle centered on the twin questions of the changes of village administration and the reduction of land rents. Old Yen Hengyuan(阎恒元), whom the author characterized as a typical sly and treacherous landlord, monopolized village administration and manipulated the activities of the village Anti-Japanese Association. Li Youcai has composed the following rhymes on him:

Yen Heng-yuan is a very strong mayor.

Ever since we had one it was Yen.

Ten Years, every year we vote for a betrayer;

Who do you think the mayor is then? (FT.6)

Li Youcai, this gifted poor peasant, was a genius. He used his rhymes to broadcast what he knew concerning certain individuals and certain activities of his village and by doing so demonstrated that the peasants had their own opinions about every individual and character around them. These rhymes, were straight-forward and sharp way attacked people like Yen Heng-yuan who earlier forcefully taken the land of half acre from Li Youcai, which he had inherited from his father. A young, enthusiastic but totally inexperienced cadre called Zhang(张), poisoned by subjectivism and bureaucratic ideas, was completely deceived by Yen Hengyuan. He called the latter “one of the enlightened gentry”, and the village “Model Village”. But the peasants could see more clearly and they sang:

Whether “Model” or not, in our village

The rich eat wheat cakes: and the poor, thin gruel.

Then from the Country Peasants Union came Comrade Yang(杨), a man who, brought up among the masses, knew what the masses wanted. Like a magnet, he immediately attracted this crowd of progressive peasant youths, who united themselves around him. The real battle against oppression began. They could not help but win: the Peasants Union was made efficient, the administration was reorganized, and the law for the reduction of land rents was carried out into effect. The author has here dealt with the subject of struggle in the villages with correctness and dexterity. He has described scrupulously all the uncertainties and complications that had arisen out of the struggle in the village, and he has portrayed accurately all kinds of rural people.

The way Zhao Shuli utilizes and adapts folk language and style is unique. “The Rhymes of Li Youcai,” as noted, is “above all a response to Mao Zedong’s call for the use of national or folk forms, a practical example of the writer speaking to and for the masses in their own. Later on this story became a model of proletarian literature, both in form and in content. Third one, Changes in Li Village”(李家庄的变迁)published in 1946, which is believed to be “The first modern realistic novel written specifically for a peasant audience.

The story “Changes of Li’s village” also deals with the war between landlord and peasant and the battle is bigger, the period longer, and the methods used more terrifying and cruel. What is unusual of this story among the writer’s works is that this story encompasses the whole process of liberation, including the origin of revolution. Its time runs from 1928 through the next two decades to the end of the War of Resistance, altogether 17 years. The characteristic humour in the former two works is now replaced by a dark heavy atmosphere. The hero of the story Tie Suo(铁锁) had a much more determined character who is more experienced, and consequently his acts were more conscious of purpose.

This long novel “The Changes in Li village” specifically describes the changes that have occurred in a village in the Taihang(太行) Mountains, Shanxi and also describes the turbulence of the political situation in Shanxi under the rule of Yan Xishan (阎锡山) and its impact on farmer’s daily life. Through the hardship of carpenter Zhang Tiesuo(张铁锁), the story shows the changes of Li jiazhuang(李家庄) before and after the Anti-Japanese War.

In this novel, we can find different characters of various classes, and the author, Zhao Shuli has beautifully portrayed the image of a group of rebellious peasants like Tiesuo(铁锁), Leng Yuan(冷元), and Bai Gou(白狗) etc and the character of Tiesuo is best among them. The novel also describes the ideological changes of Tiesuo in different phase of the revolution. Under the guidance of the party, from a simple peasant, he turned into a revolutionary fighter. This change of mentality and dedication, as a farmer, has an extraordinary significance. Though there are some shortcomings in the novel which fail to achieve a higher artistic achievement but “Changes in Li village” is indeed regarded as a masterpiece of peasant literature of China. Apart from these famous stories, looking at the other stories written by Zhao Shuli and one can have an idea on how he has been able to enlighten the Chinese rural masses of that era.

Zhao Shuli emphasized the liberation of women under the reconstruction of the new order. There are many women images in his writing and his stories like “Marriage of Xiao Erhei”, “Registration” “Rise of Meng Xiangying” ”(孟祥英翻身)and "Family Heirloom"”(传家宝), etc where women's liberation embodied. Zhao Shuli criticized those who were against the idea of women’s liberation like those old mother-in-law’s for their traditional and conservative attitude to engage women’s only in indoor works. Zhao Shuli criticized the oppression and enslavement of women in Chinese society in a system where these mother-in-law’s were also victims. Zhao Shuli didn’t include these backward women in the list of women’s liberation as he considered them as obstacles in the women's liberation movement. The most important point in his story “Registration “is that, Zhao Shuli beautifully exposed that though C.P.C raised the issue of freedom of marriage for the adult boys and girls but here one can see how the policies were not properly implemented due to the backwardness and hypocrisy of the officials involved as well showed actual freedom was not in the hand of young people but in the hand of government officials.

Important contribution of Zhao Shuli was that his works reflect clear cut optimism which was not very common in Chinese literature of that era. Even in many complicated issues of the rural society, one could easily see the optimism and probably Zhao used to hate depression thus at the end of his all most every stories, less number of depressed characters are focused and his famous stories like “Marriage of Xiao Erhei”, “Rhymes of Li Youcai”, “Old Customs”, “Registration” have an happy end. Zhao Shuli was not only a writer to propagate new culture in his writings but was also an active worker of rural development which is one of the secret of his great success. During that time, before him, many May Fourth writers had raised these peasants’ issues and had also emphasized the need of literature for the peasant masses but most of them had not adequate practical experience like him. Thus actual interest of the common masses was far from what they had put forwarded but as a writer, Zhao Shuli had very wide knowledge of peasant’s interest and need which enable his writings to touch the inner heart of the peasant masses.

It was Zhao Shuli, who strongly believed that, it was important during the anti-Japanese war to popularize art because that would help to raise the literary standard of the common masses so that different messages could also easily be conveyed to them directly through art and culture. According to Zhao, the task of popularization of art was to make masses accept and grasp the new culture. Popularization must serve as a bridge between culture and masses and raise the cultural standard of the masses. The popularization of art and literature means popularization of culture which may be considered as new enlighten movement(新启蒙运动), a movement aimed to eliminate the obstructions of the masses towards understanding literature, transform their old ideas and make them fit to accept new world views.

Conclusion:

In the last two decades, The Chinese government finally adopted the policy called 'Three Farming Policy' (三农政策), Thus the issues of village, agriculture and peasant have become a state issues of China now but Zhao Shuli may be the second modern Chinese writer after Lu Xun, who realized the importance of these issues very seriously. The theme of many of his writings has link to the 'Three farming policy' of the presentday Chinese Government. The greatest contribution of Zhao was that he, through his stories, was able to send different social messages to the interior rural people during that time. If we analyze from other angles, to convey messages from cities to villages in China during that time was very tough as there were no different types of medium as we have today. It was very common that in most of the villages, there was no radio, television etc that can be used as a medium to propagate the messages of the nation building to the rural masses. But literary works of Zhao Shuli fulfilled that gap and for that, C.P.C should be thankful to him that their policies were fearlessly conveyed by Zhao Shuli through his simple writings to the vast rural community at a period of turmoil and later on which helped C.P.C. to consolidate their power in those rural areas.

After the liberation and birth of Peoples Republic of China in 1949, Zhao Shuli's novel described the ideological, ethical and psychological controversies following the socialist revolution in the countryside, displaying the improved ability of the new literature to present and interpret reality under socialism. The vigorous realistic work of Zhao Shuli gave rise to new trends among the younger writers. It also reflects the arduousness of this movement in a realistic way and profoundly proposes to educate and transform the peasants with socialist ideology. It is a long-term task. The rarest thing is that in the late 1950s, Zhao Shuli faced the serious situation of the destruction of the rural economy. He showed an artist's valuable courage and responsibility.

Finally, it can be concluded that profound spirit of realism is consistent characteristics of Zhao Shuli's novels. In the 1940s, due to his novel's profound exploration of rural life in the Liberated Areas, he was called "the singer of the authentic liberated areas". After the national liberation, Zhao Shuli was still engaged in creation with a rigorous realism attitude, continued to penetrate the countryside for a long time. He continued to make himself familiar with rural life, tried to eliminate all kinds of interference, and insisted that everything should start from the reality of life. His works truly represent the achievements and problems in the rural socialist revolution before liberation and socialist construction after the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Foot Notes:

1. Quoted from "The Collection of Zhao Shuli's Collected Works" .(赵树理研究文集，中卷)
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